

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. B(1)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: March 27, 2012

TITLE: Public Hearing on the Draft West Main Street Road Diet Study and Oak-Poplar Neighborhood Traffic Circulation Study

DEPARTMENT: Planning	PUBLIC HEARING: YES <u>X</u> NO ___
ATTACHMENTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. ResolutionB. Oak-Poplar Neighborhood Traffic Circulation Study and West Main Street Road Diet Study – draft (<i>Appendix 3 omitted</i>)C. Transportation Advisory Board recommendationsD. Town-NCDOT correspondence	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeff Brubaker – 918-7329 Felix Nwoko, DCHC-MPO – 560-4366 x36424

PURPOSE

This agenda item is the public hearing for the West Main Street Road Diet and Pavement Marking Study and the Oak-Poplar Neighborhood Traffic Circulation Study. The Board is asked to consider the resolution in *Attachment A*.

INFORMATION

Background

On February 8, 2011, the Board of Aldermen received a report from the Transportation Advisory Board on a road diet concept for W. Main St. At the meeting, the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization's Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator presented examples of recent road diets on state-maintained roads in Durham. The Board adopted a resolution supporting the road diet concept and directing staff to conduct an analysis of traffic and safety impacts of implementation. As part of a study jointly funded by the Town and DCHC-MPO, the engineering and planning firm Martin/Alexiou/Bryson (M/A/B) has been contracted to conduct the analysis. The agenda materials from the February 8, 2011, meeting are available at the following link: http://townofcarrboro.org/BoA/Agendas/2011/02_08_2011.htm. At this meeting, the Board also directed Town staff to send a letter to NCDOT conveying the Board's interest in the road diet concept and requesting that it be considered at the time of resurfacing. The letter and response from NCDOT are included in *Attachment D*.

The impetus of the traffic circulation plan is a Board resolution from September 16, 2008, directing staff to organize a neighborhood meeting to discuss traffic management in the Oak-Poplar neighborhood, bounded by N. Greensboro St., W. Main St., Weaver St., and Carrboro

Elementary. The agenda materials from the September 16, 2008, meeting are available at the following link: http://townofcarrboro.org/BoA/Agendas/2008/09_16_2008.htm.

On December 7, 2010, the Board of Aldermen approved the use of \$5,000 budgeted for the Oak-Poplar neighborhood traffic circulation plan as a local match for \$20,000 in MPO funding to complete the traffic circulation plan itself and the road diet study concurrently. (Because MPO funding is used, and the City of Durham is the designated lead planning agency for the MPO, the City of Durham is the contractor of the study, although Town staff provided the primary direction for the study tasks.) The draft document included in *Attachment B* is the package of both of these studies. The agenda materials from the December 7, 2010, meeting are available at the following link: http://townofcarrboro.org/BoA/Agendas/2010/12_07_2010.htm.

Two public participation activities were held to inform the plan: a neighborhood walk in November 2011 and a neighborhood meeting in December 2011. Both were moderately attended and fostered valuable input on, and thorough discussion of, traffic issues in the neighborhood. Residents were also encouraged to send comments via phone or email, especially if they could not attend one of the public participation opportunities. A summary of public comments is included in Appendix 2 of the plan (*Attachment B*).

On March 6, 2012, the Board received a presentation on the plan, provided additional comments, referred the plan to the TAB for review (with consideration of Board comments), and set this public hearing date. The agenda materials and the full plan are available at the following link: http://townofcarrboro.org/BoA/Agendas/2012/03_06_2012.htm.

On March 15, 2012, the TAB reviewed the plan and adopted the recommendations in *Attachment C*. One additional comment was provided via email on March 23 from a resident unable to attend the public hearing. The comment expressed appreciation for the TAB's consideration of the plan, expressed support for the TAB's recommendation on the one-way study for Oak Ave., and recommended that something be done to mitigate the safety issues associated with pedestrian crossing at the north end of Oak Ave.

Other reviewers

A draft of the plan was sent to the NCDOT Division and District offices, Chapel Hill Transit, Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools' Education Department, and MPO staff for review. The staff-level Traffic and Parking Committee has also discussed the plan at its recent meetings.

Summary of major findings

The draft study is included in *Attachment B*. Appendix 3 (50 pages) – Synchro and Sidra traffic analysis tables and maps – has been omitted to save paper in the agenda packet. A full report is available at the following link: http://townofcarrboro.org/BoA/Agendas/2012/03_06_2012.htm (Item D1). A summary of major findings is below:

West Main Street Road Diet and Pavement Marking Study

- Road diets have safety benefits for pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile travel.
- The pavement markings on West Main Street could be modified to provide a travel lane in each direction, a center two-way left-turn lane, and bike lanes on each side of the street

and still provide acceptable levels of service (A or B) at the intersections in the study area.

- Field measurements indicate that the desired typical section for the road diet can be accommodated within the existing curb to curb width of West Main Street.
- With a roundabout alternative, all approaches to the W. Main-W. Weaver intersection would operate at LOS A. There may be some right-of-way challenges for construction of a roundabout given the current intersection alignment.

Oak-Poplar Neighborhood Traffic Circulation Study

- Traffic and safety issues include:
 - Lack of sidewalks on certain streets or street segments
 - Lack of crosswalks/crossing difficulties on W. Main St.
 - Lack of marked pedestrian crossing or raised pedestrian refuge island at Oak-Greensboro intersection, and vehicles turning right onto Oak at higher speeds
 - School circulation issues at the Ashe-Shelton; Shelton-Shelton extension; and Shelton-Hillsborough-Main intersections
 - Concern about cut-through traffic on Oak and Poplar Aves.
 - Failure to obey stop signs at neighborhood intersections
 - Awkward intersection geometry at W. Main-W. Weaver-Elm intersection
 - Congestion on N. Greensboro St. delaying travel out of neighborhood.
- Potential solutions are offered in the study. Some would need further, more detailed study of traffic impacts before proceeding. Potential solutions include:
 - Making Oak Ave. one-way
 - Traffic calming on Oak Ave.
 - Traffic calming on Shelton St.
 - Raised pedestrian islands at N. Greensboro-Oak and W. Main-W. Weaver intersections
 - Address awkward intersection geometry at the W. Main-W. Weaver-Elm intersection
 - Reconstruct the Shelton-Hillsborough-W. Main intersection
 - Construct sidewalks on Oak Ave. and Shelton St. (a sidewalk is soon to be built on Elm).
 - Mid-block, marked, pedestrian crossings on West Main Street (possibly with raised, pedestrian refuge islands)

On March 6, the Board provided comments on circulation and ped-bike options for Oak Ave. and other neighborhood streets. Another Board comment expressed a preference for a pedestrian refuge island at the W. Main St. and Poplar Ave. intersection. These comments were considered by the TAB in its March 15 review. One TAB recommendation (*Attachment C*) recommends a traffic impact analysis for one-way configurations for Oak Ave.

FISCAL AND STAFF IMPACT

The proposed road diet concept is a restriping of the road segment at the time of resurfacing. Restriping must occur after resurfacing even if pavement markings remain the same. Since Main St. is a State-maintained street, resurfacing costs are ordinarily borne by NCDOT's annual resurfacing budget. Main St. is not included on the 2012 resurfacing schedule. However, it has been several years since Main St. was resurfaced, and wear and tear is evident.

There may be a marginal difference in pavement marking costs with a road diet configuration, although the exact amount is not known at this time. For road diets in Durham, NCDOT funded 100 percent of the resurfacing and new pavement markings. Although timing of implementation is not currently known, state law requires that the highway division consider any special needs or information provided by a municipality when developing its annual resurfacing work plan [NCGS 166-66.1(1)].

If the road diet is implemented, about fifteen hours of staff time would be necessary for:

- Coordination with NCDOT and Chapel Hill to address whether signal timing changes will need to be made at the W. Main-W. Weaver intersection to mitigate potential impacts to traffic delay.
- Coordination to determine adjusting the lateral location of signal heads
- Preparation of Town Code amendments establishing new bike lanes

The TAB recommendation recommends that the Board direct staff to complete a traffic impact analysis of one-way configurations for Oak Ave. A detailed traffic impact analysis would require collection of traffic data, analysis, recommendations, public outreach, and Board/advisory board presentations, and may require 200 or more staff hours to complete. If it is desired that the TIA be conducted by a registered engineer, a consultant would need to be procured. Assuming 200 hours and a billable (direct + overhead + fee) hourly rate of between \$80 and \$120, a rough cost estimate for procuring a consultant would range between \$16,000 and \$24,000. A more detailed cost estimate for a TIA can be provided if desired by the Board.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend that the Board consider the resolution in *Attachment A*. The resolution accepts the studies and allows for the Board to provide further comments and direction.

Should the Board wish to proceed with the next steps in implementing the road diet, action steps are provided for the Board's consideration of inclusion in the resolution. These steps include directing staff to coordinate with the consultant to complete the preliminary pavement marking plan for W. Main St., and directing the Town Manager to send the Board a letter to NCDOT conveying the Board's resolution on the West Main Street Road Diet and Pavement Marking Study along with a copy of the study, the preliminary pavement marking plan (upon completion), and any other necessary supporting information.